

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1728  
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Culture, Recreation & Tourism  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

A nonprofit organization that provides hunting and fishing trips for veterans in Texas has expressed concern regarding the inability of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) to permit these types of trips without burdensome licensing requirements. Currently, the organization covers the cost of a hunting or fishing license for any participant who doesn't already have one. The goal of these trips is to provide mental health support in a low-pressure, relaxed environment, and allowing veterans to participate without having to be licensed would enable organizations to offer this experience to more veterans in Texas. H.B. 1728 seeks to address this issue by giving TPWD the option to partner with nonprofit entities that serve Texas veterans and by providing licensing exemptions for veterans who participate in one-day hunting or fishing trips with these nonprofit partners.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1728 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to authorize the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to select and cooperate with one or more nonprofit partners that exclusively serve veterans to promote hunting and fishing by those veterans. The bill requires a selection to be approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission and defines "veteran" as a person who has served in the U.S. armed forces. The bill authorizes a veteran who is a Texas resident and who is served by a selected nonprofit to hunt or fish on one day, respectively, without holding the required license for that activity if accompanied by a representative of the nonprofit partner who holds the appropriate license. The bill requires the commission by rule to establish the following:

- criteria under which TPWD may select a nonprofit partner; and
- guidelines under which a representative of or a veteran served by a nonprofit partner may engage in the hunting or fishing activities.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2021.